

To: Christopher Mebane[cmebane@usgs.gov]
From: Tomten, Dave
Sent: Thur 8/13/2015 2:54:32 PM
Subject: RE: Best (better?) news stories & video on Gold King Mine/Animas River mishap

Thanks Chris. I hadn't seen the video or any real data, in spite of looking over about 50+ emails over the past couple of days. I want to talk. You around later today?

Dave

From: Christopher Mebane [mailto:cmebane@usgs.gov]
Sent: Wednesday, August 12, 2015 7:20 PM
To: gmclark@usgs.gov; Kyle Blasch; Alex Etheridge; Brian Twining; Candice B Hopkins; cmebane@usgs.gov; Gordon Rattray; Kenneth D Skinner; Marshall Williams; Roy C Bartholomay
Cc: Tomten, Dave; Weigel, Greg; Wilkening, Matt; Timothy R Merrick
Subject: Best (better?) news stories & video on Gold King Mine/Animas River mishap

I'm sure many of you are following this, but I thought I pass on links to some of the better reporting I've seen.

IMHO, by far the most thoughtful and comprehensive story is High Country News' "When our river turned orange," Aug 9. Discusses the incident and history, including how the local business interests and allies fought off EPA Superfund designation for years, because Superfund designation would be bad for business. Instead the cleanups limped along following a series of undercapitalized measures.

The comments from locals are pretty enlightening. I guess if you live around Silverton, geochemistry and mine/groundwater hydrology are popular topics.

The video of mine water and a series of giant kiddy pools hastily constructed to slow the release are worth a look.

Hard data is hard to find. The EPA incident response site had a graph up yesterday showing copper spiking at greater than 1000 µg/L, but didn't say where it was or if they were filtered or totals. With greater than 1000 µg/L. But now the graph has been taken down, and instead a table is referenced as showing declining trends and that values have reached pre-release values, but there is no table. There is a table showing initial Aug 5 data, but I'm guessing it was before the

plume hit since it shows dissolved Fe at <100 µg/L and Cu <3 µg/L. Lots of statements by high managers, but no numbers to be seen. I imagine things are a tad chaotic at EPA R8 right now.

The Denver Post has a number of stories; although not a lot of depth. A friend of mine in Ft Collins set up the caged fish testing in this link, but he's camera shy and ducked the interview.
http://www.denverpost.com/environment/ci_28614946/epa-taking-damage-claims-toxic-spill-animas-river

AP actually did some pretty good reporting, for instance: "Fearing stigma, Colorado fought federal help to clean mine; EPA had tried for decades to list site for Superfund help"

Sorry if this is just email clutter, but I thought it might be of interest to some.

Chris

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